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SUBJECT: LETTER TO PRESIDENT BUSH FROM SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ISLAMIC COMMISSION OF SPAIN

REF: MADRID 3671

1. At Embassy Madrid's Iftar dinner on October 13 (see reftel), the Ambassador received a letter from the Secretary General of the Islamic Commission of Spain (ICS), Mansur Escudero, addressed to President Bush. Post is engaged in an active program of Muslim Outreach, and in this area, Escudero is one of our most important contacts. A Spanish convert to Islam, Escudero is a moderate Muslim who as head of the ICS is the Spanish government's primary interlocutor on religious issues with the Muslim community in Spain. Given the importance of this contact, post would appreciate some sort of response to the letter. Translated text follows.

2. Begin text of letter:

Dear Mr. President:

On celebrating iftar today, the 10th day of Ramadan, at the Embassy of the United States in Madrid, I want to send you my cordial regards for the American people and a message of goodwill from Spanish Muslims.

On March 11th, the Islamic Commission of Spain, the highest representative body of Spanish Muslims before the Spanish State, issued a fatwa against terrorism, declaring it alien to the spirit and the letter of Islam, and specifically condemning Al Qaeda terrorism, which falsely pretends to base itself on the Sacred Qur'an and the Sunna of the Prophet Mohammed, may God bless and save Him.

I must tell you that, as a representative of a small Muslim community with deeply rooted historic ties to Christianity and Judaism, the fatwa against terrorism is an express declaration of our faith in Islam as a religion of peace and harmony, totally incompatible with any form of aggression or terror, capable of accepting all prior revelations and an excellent paradigm of civilization for these turbulent times.

That same fatwa expressly condemns the claim on Al Andalus (Andalusia, Spain) issued by Al Qaeda, clearly showing, from a spiritual and legal standpoint, the contradiction inherent in such a claim. We say the tragedy of Al Andalus is in the hands of God, the best of judges, the Lord of History; and the Treaty of Cooperation signed between the Spanish State and the Islamic Commission of Spain in 1992 opened a new chapter in the relationship between the Spanish State and Spanish Muslims, based on the recognition of the contribution of Islam to Spanish identity and the desire for mutual, loyal cooperation to the benefit of all Spaniards.

Moved by the same spirit that brought us to draft the fatwa, we write to you to ask you to lead a project of peace and prosperity in the world in which, as the prophet Isaiah says, "swords are converted to ploughshares and spears to pruning knives, where people do not rise up against people nor are they schooled in war."

This is the project that America is called to take upon itself in this decisive century, the project of consolidating Peace and Justice in the world. This is the project that Muslims desire and to which we invite all the powerful of the earth, since we believe that all Power comes from God and there is no Authority but His.

For Muslims, Islam means peace, health and harmony. I invite you, therefore, to Islam, to promote good and reject evil, to put the immense material and spiritual capital of your nation to work in favor of peace, justice and world prosperity.

In this endeavor you can count on Spanish Muslims, aware that the world demands entry into an era of global wellbeing in which peace, justice and freedom are the best of businesses and where delirium and hate give way to sanity, to peaceful coexistence and freedom.

May God illuminate you in your responsibilities to govern and bless America and all the peoples of the earth.

(signed: Mansur Escudero)
Mansur Abdusalam Escudero
Secretary General of the Islamic Commission of Spain

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